

of their relative lengths. Anal spine very slender, and about half the length of the soft rays. The caudal is injured, but appears to have been of nearly the same form as in the *U. arenata*. The pectorals are about three-fourths the length of the head, but the ends of the rays are worn. The ventrals are of the same length as the pectorals in their present state: they are placed rather backward than in the *U. arenata*, being attached beneath the first third of the pectorals: there is a pointed scale in their axilla, of about the same relative size as in that species. The scales on the body are rather smaller, ciliated on their free edges, with a fan of eleven or twelve striæ behind. There are rows of small scales on the caudal, but none apparent on the other fins.

COLOUR.—Mr. Darwin did not notice the colours of this species in its recent state. *In spirits*, it appears of a nearly uniform dusky brown, but paler on the abdomen, with traces of silvery reflections about the head. The fins are dark, but the anal paler at the base than at the tips of the rays.

Habitat, Coquimbo, Chile.

This species may be at once distinguished from all those described in the 'Histoire des Poissons,' by its very elongated form. The head also has a peculiar character about it, and is not unlike that of some serpents. It appears to be the first species of this genus brought from the Pacific, the other foreign ones being all found either in the Indian seas, or on the Atlantic side of America. There are two specimens in the collection, exactly similar, and both obtained by Mr. Darwin at Coquimbo. They are, however, both in very bad condition; so much so, indeed, that I should have hesitated about describing them as new, had they not presented several obvious peculiarities.

#### GENUS—PRIONODES.\* *Jen.*

*Serrani formam quam maximè gerens. Pinna dorsalis unica, per totam longitudinem subæqualis. Membrana branchialis septem-radiata. Nec fovea, nec pori, infrà symphysin. Dentes maxillares velutini, serie externâ cæteris fortiori, paucis, hic illic sparsis, subcaninis; palatini nulli. Preoperculum denticulatum. Operculum mucronibus tribus posticè armatum. Spina analis secunda fortis. Squamæ corporis ciliatæ; minutissimæ inter radios pinnarum verticalium, in seriebus dispositæ.*

I am called upon either to establish this new genus among the *Sciænidae*, or to break down one of the essential distinctions set by Cuvier between this family

\* *Serræ figuram habens. Α πριων.*

and the *Percidæ*. The form is so completely that of a *Serranus*,—which it resembles especially in its dorsal fin, head, maxillary teeth, form and armature of the pieces of the gill cover, and in the arrangement of the scales on the body,—that at first sight no one would hesitate to refer it to that group; but *the vomer and palatines are without teeth*.\* In this respect, indeed, I consider it an important discovery; as it affords another striking instance of the uncertainty of this character, in cases in which others, which have been generally made subordinate to it, remain constant. It is probable that the time will come, when it will be found necessary to revise some portion of the *Percidæ* and *Sciænidae* with reference to a more correct valuation of this character. For the present, however, I refrain from interfering with the Cuvierian arrangement; and the only alternative is to consider this as a new form among the *Sciænidae*, where it must be placed along with those genera possessing one dorsal fin, and having seven rays in the branchiostegous membrane. Such are *Hæmulon*, *Pristipoma*, and *Diagramma*; from all which, however, it is at once distinguished by the absence of pores at the symphysis and on the lower jaw, and by the much more developed spines on the opercle, and from *Pristipoma* by its having, further, scales on the vertical fins. On the whole, it seems to approach nearest to *Hæmulon*; but the crown and snout are more free from scales than in that genus, and the scales on the body are not set in oblique rows, as is the case in so many of the true *Sciænidae*. The head also has no cavernous appearance about it. This new form is from the Galapagos Archipelago.

#### PRIONODES FASCIATUS. *Jen.*

PLATE IX. Fig. 1.

*P. pallidè flavescens-fuscus, fasciis transversis plurimis suprâ rubescens-nigris infrâ miniatis; pinnis verticalibus maculis parvis ocellatis: vertice, rostro, et maxillis, nudis; preoperculo margine adscendenti denticulato, basali lævi; operculo mucrone intermedio forti; spinis dorsalibus ad apices laciniis investitis; pinnâ caudali subæquali.*

B. 7; D. 10/12; A. 3/7; C. 17; P. 18; V. 1/5.

LONG. unc. 7. lin. 3.

FORM.—Oval, compressed; the back not much arched, forming one continuous curve with the profile, which falls gently from the nape; ventral line less convex than the dorsal. Greatest

\* With the exception of a small rough oblong spot, near the posterior extremity of the left palatine.